

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 21 with the following rewritten paragraph:**

When nonmetallic inclusion is converted to  $\text{MnO-SiO}_2\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$  containing not less than 15 mass % of  $\text{SiO}_2$  and not more than 40 mass % of  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ , it is divided to fine harmless size by hot-rolling and cold-rolling so as to decrease its susceptibility to cracking during forming. If the nonmetallic inclusion contains less than 15 mass % of  $\text{SiO}_2$  or more than 40 mass % of  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ , it is changed to galaxite, which is hardly divided by hot- and cold-rolling. In this case, cracking easily occurs during forming a steel sheet to an objective shape. Therefore, the nonmetallic inclusion shall be converted to  $\text{MnO-SiO}_2\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$  containing not less than 15 mass % of  $\text{SiO}_2$  and not more than 40 mass % of  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ .

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 1 with the following rewritten paragraph:**

According to the present invention as above-mentioned, austenitic stainless steel, which contains Si and Al at controlled ratios, is refined and deoxidized with a Si alloy whose Al content is restricted under a certain level, so as to make up a structure wherein nonmetallic inclusion is minutely dispersed as  $\text{MnO-SiO}_2\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$  inclusion in a steel sheet. Since the austenitic stainless steel sheet can be formed to an objective shape without occurrence of cracking due to a decrease in its susceptibility to cracking, it is useful as steel members or parts in various industrial fields.

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

~~Please cancel pending claims 1 and 2 and add new claims 3-10 as follows.~~

3. An austenitic stainless steel that is less susceptible to cracking during forming, which has a composition comprising approximately 0-0.04 mass % C, approximately 0.1-1.0 mass % Si, approximately 0-5.0 mass % of Mn, approximately 0-0.0060 mass % S, approximately 0-0.003 mass % Al, approximately 5-9 mass % Ni,

approximately 15-20 mass % Cr, approximately 0-0.035 mass % N, approximately 1.0-5.0 mass % Cu and the balance being Fe except inevitable impurities, and has nonmetallic MnO-SiO<sub>2</sub>-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> inclusions, which contains not less than approximately 15 mass % of SiO<sub>2</sub> and not more than approximately 40 mass % of Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, dispersed in its matrix.

4. A method of manufacturing austenitic stainless steel, which comprises the steps of:

preparing a molten steel having the composition comprising approximately 0-0.04 mass % C, approximately 0.1-1.0 mass % Si, approximately 0-5.0 mass % Mn, approximately 0-0.0060 mass % S, approximately 0-0.003 mass % Al, approximately 5-9 mass % Ni, approximately 15-20 mass % Cr, approximately 0-0.035 mass % N, approximately 1.0-5.0 mass % Cu and the balance being Fe except inevitable impurities;

covering said molten steel with basic slag in a vacuum or non-oxidizing atmosphere; and

deoxidizing said molten steel by addition of a Si alloy whose Al content is controlled less than approximately 1.0 mass %.

5. The austenitic stainless steel according to claim 3, further including a boron content up to a max of 0.03 mass %, if the sulfur content is greater than 0.0030 mass %.

6. The austenitic stainless steel according to claim 3, wherein the composition preferably has a value of  $d \leq 0$  and  $a > 0$ , where

$$d = 1.9 \text{ Ni} + 32\text{C} + 27\text{N} + 0.15 (\text{Mn} + \text{Cu}) - 1.5\text{Cr} + 8.5 \text{ and}$$

$$a = \text{Ni} + 0.5\text{Cr} + 0.7 (\text{Mn} + \text{Cu}) - 18.$$

7. The method of manufacturing austenitic stainless steel according to claim 4, further comprising the step of achieving not less than approximately 15 mass % of